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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a survey of the development of linguistics and the influence of linguistics on second language learning. Emphasis is given to the era beginning with language instruction during World War II to the present day. The influence of structural linguistics is described. The resulting audiolingual approach is also considered and evaluated. The resurgence of traditional grammar accompanying the development of transformation theory and a cognitive approach is discussed. The author considers the contributions as well as the shortcomings of the theories and states that the element most severely neglected by linguistic theory is meaning. (VM)

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The Influence of Linguistics: Plus and Minus

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To get past the question-begging look of my title as quickly as possible, I must assert that I believe linguistics has influenced language teaching, and that in many ways, but not all, the influence has been good. I hope that when we add the two columns we will find that the good outweighs the bad, but that conclusion may not be as clear to some as to others.

But the problem is not so much in escaping the petitio principii as in pinning down what one means by "influence". Once we look at the various meanings of the term language-teaching, it becomes clear that for each sense of that term there is a different sense in which linguistics can be an influence, whether for good or ill. By language-teaching do we refer to teaching Tibetan, or French? It is not foolish to ask this question because most of our discussion of language teaching has been in the context of related languages. It is one thing to depreciate the contribution of linguistics to French-teaching, where the sharing of vocabulary and syntax enables the student half the time to do without aids of any kind, and something different to appreciate the need for a highly detailed description done by a competent linguist in learning a language that differs in fundamental ways from our own. By language-teaching do we mean teaching to read or to converse, to understand only or both to understand and to communicate? If only to understand, with many languages it will be possible to dispense with at least some of the rules of syntax; given a knowledge of word forms and a situation of use, the student can usually guess the rest; he has less need of linguistic guidance. If by language teaching we do mean communication, then to what degree of intensity do we carry it? Is the student to communicate as much like a native speaker as possible--is he, that

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is, to be what Lambert calls an integrative learner? If so, we must give him not only language but paralanguage: the linguist will need to go much farther than he has up to now in describing the body language that accompanies speech. His influence will necessarily be much richer than if the student is to communicate only as an instrumental learner, to get a message across and trust to the interest more than to the sympathy of his hearer to respond as he hopes. Does language-teaching mean teaching children more about their native language? In this context the linguist's job is specialized to that of a sociolinguist: he must speak of usage and of dialect.

In each of these senses it is clear that the answer must refer to some product of linguistic inquiry--good if the product is good, bad if it is bad. There are, I suppose, good grammars and sketchy grammars of Tibetan, well-balanced and overbalanced selections of rules for learning to read, prejudiced and unprejudiced descriptions of the native language, and if teachable descriptions of paralanguage are ever to appear some of them will help and others may hinder. As long as we assume that anything about language from any approach whatever can be taught, we must deal at some point with a linguistic product, which can be good or bad. If that were the only issue we could turn immediately to some examples of good and bad grammars or dictionaries, and not worry particularly about questions of pedagogy. The linguist's role would be limited to description and he would be involved in questions of teaching only to the extent that he might be consulted on what or how much of a description would be best to include for a given purpose. Unfortunately we also have other things in mind when we ask what the influence of linguistics has been on language teaching. We believe that it has played a part in determining effective and ineffective ways of teaching, helpful and unhelpful attitudes toward language, and positive and negative motivations. These are not so much products as byproducts

As Professor Wardhaugh so ably pointed out this morning, the attitudes of linguists count most heavily.

of linguistics, which stem from the ways linguists theorize and behave toward the object of their study. Their feeling about what can be known in their field--its epistemology, about what can be done with it--its praxis, about the nature and order of importance of its parts--its structure, and about its place in the mind or in culture--its ontology, all of which can be summed up as how they feel about the nature of language, has a direct relation to the linguist's influence on language teaching. Since it also affects the kinds of descriptions that are made, it deals a double blow: indirectly by way of the descriptions, directly by the transmittal of the philosophy itself.

The best initial approach to the indirect side of this two-part influence is probably by way of history. And it is also well to consider the historical relation between linguistics and language teaching to keep a proper balance, for if linguistics can be said to influence language teaching today, language teaching could be said to have given birth to linguistics two thousand years ago. At least, it was one of the two parents, the other of which was philosophy. The Greeks had their ideas about the kinship between language and reality, and carried on lively debates as to whether language was a natural phenomenon or a conventional one; and they looked for ties between language and logic which they thought they had found in the noun and the verb, the concept and the thing said about it; but they were also language teachers to the Romans, and it was in this function that they had to make practical decisions about translation rules between Greek and Latin. It remains true today that many linguists--probably the majority of those over forty years of age--first found themselves attracted to the study of linguistics through the curiosity they began to feel when they had to study a language other than their own. Things have changed only in that nowadays a budding linguist is about as likely to go hunting for a foreign language in order to indulge his interest in linguistics, as to find himself inspired to become a linguist

through the study of a foreign language. In one way or another the two fields are still mutually enriching.

The Greek and Roman linguists were influential far beyond their time and in ways that they themselves might well have repudiated. By bequeathing a description of their languages to posterity, they also bequeathed the notion that in order to be properly described a language had to fit the norms that they had set up for Greek and Latin. The grammars were taken not as reflections of the languages but as categorizations of reality, and this both reinforced and was reinforced by the notion of the classical languages as an embodiment of the ideal. One is reminded of the philosopher who concluded that the horse was meant to be subdued because its mouth was so perfectly adapted to the bit. A language that did not conform to the grammar of Greek and Latin could only be imperfect to the extent that it failed to conform. Add to this the consciousness that speakers who were also scholars--at least those who spoke a Romance tongue--had of the relationship between their supposedly corrupted manner of speech and Latin (the writers at the court of Alfonso X still spoke of "nuestro latín", our Latin, as the language of the classics), and you see the mutually reinforcing arguments: Latin documents contained all true learning, the Latin language conformed to the rules of grammar; ergo, Latin was the only language worthy to be taught. The influence of those early linguists not only determined the manner of teaching, but also helped to determine the very object to be taught. It was reinforced still further as the medieval philosophers made Latin the proving ground for their philosophy. The trivium of language, rhetoric, and logic, which made up half of the liberal arts curriculum, was thus entirely composed of language-related topics. Latin grammar is still with us, for which we can thank those grammarians; and in part we can thank them for the continuing popularity of Latin.

The Renaissance of course brought new attitudes toward language, chief of which was the consecration of vernaculars. But not much was changed. In place of a vanished linguistic Eden there came about what might be termed a cataclysmic theory of language. How did this come about? Well, the speaker of a Renaissance vernacular had the pride of his culture and was less willing to view his language as a corrupt form of Latin. He wanted to accord it a place beside Latin, and to do this he conceived of language as something that reflected culture not only in its concepts but also in its evolution. There was the Roman empire and there was the Latin language. Both fell into decay. Out of decay there grew a new culture and a new language. What the modern linguist knows had not yet been discovered: that every human language at every point in history is a system in relatively stable equilibrium, as capable of serving the communicative needs of its users as the most refined idiom of classical times. The Renaissance scholar was aware of deviations from the forms of speech that he took to be the norms of the new language; but these he discounted as seeds of decay, and he polemicized against them. Now that a new language had been achieved, it was the task of the grammarian to defend it. To defend it one had to understand it and write its rules. Out of this identification of language and culture there arose, of course, the academies of language and the whole tradition of normative rules that has persisted to this day. With Latin, one hardly needed normative rules--one needed only rules, for the old disputes were forgotten. But with the new language the assaults on it were daily audible in the mouths of unlettered people, and had to be contended against. The grammarian overplayed his role, and the effects--in the shape of normative grammar--are still with us.

I could carry this apocalyptic survey through its full course if there were time for it, but I halt it now hoping to have proved my point: that the linguistics of the past had a profound

effect on language teaching, and that when linguists quarrel with language teachers they are really making teachers the butt of their quarrels with other linguists. Until not many years ago one could say that it was with linguists of an earlier generation; but with the acceleration of change it may well happen now that one's adversary is still alive and promoting his views. The result may be more smoke than fire and language teachers who would like illumination find themselves lost in the murk. Let me try at this point to bring things up to date and inquire what's new since we learned that Latin grammar was inadequate and normative grammar was bad.

It's generally claimed that linguistics became scientific in the 19th century, and I suppose that that's true. A science needs intellectual tools and the historical ones that were forged then proved applicable to the study of linguistic change. But this very fact decreed that the whole period would be one of benign neglect as far as language teaching was concerned. Of all the aspects of linguistics as a discipline, historical linguistics is the one of least practical interest. So it was not until Ferdinand de Saussure proclaimed the independence of synchronic linguistics--the study of language systems at a given stage--from historical, that linguistics as a science could begin working again on problems that concern language teachers as well as linguists. When we speak of the modern influence of linguistics we virtually mean contemporary. Linguists had a scant three or four decades to devote themselves to descriptive study before they were called upon, in the forties, to answer an unexpected summons.

I'll give you one brief chapter of this story in dialog form as I have it from Milton Cowan of Cornell University. The conversation is between Mortimer Graves, who at that time was Deputy Director of the American Council of Learned Societies, and a colonel who was a friend of his:

Colonel: Mortimer, we've got to send 105 ordnance officers to China. How can we teach 'em Chinese?

Mortimer: How much time have you got?

Colonel: Two weeks.

Mortimer: (after a short pause) Well, you've got to have faith, but it can be done. There's a corporal named Charles Hockett raking leaves down at Vint Hill Farms. He doesn't know Chinese but he knows how to learn it faster than anybody else and he can teach it to others as fast as they can learn it. He's a linguist. (another pause) You say these are officers?

Colonel: Yes.

Mortimer: How are they going out?

Colonel: By boat to Bombay.

Mortimer: That's fine. They'll learn Chinese on a slow boat to China. But they'll have to knock off the military bit and forget that Hockett's a corporal. This will be a civilian-type activity.

Colonel: OK, we'll buy it. We can't do anything else.

Some linguists I suppose are born language teachers, others achieve the

status, but this was the first time that language teaching was thrust upon them. However that may be, we should ask what it was that distinguished linguistic thinking at the time, how it influenced the way language courses were set up, and in hindsight what was good and bad about it.

The linguists of the forties were structuralists. On the American scene this meant a number of pretty definite things, of which we can quickly check off the ones that most clearly determined the kind of language curriculum they would set up.

First, they were behavioristically oriented. Their teaching methods accordingly adopted the notion of conditioning. Language was viewed as a form of behavior which was modified by practise more than by insight. The rules were descriptions of elements of behavior which could be stated and understood but mainly had to be drilled until they became habits. What has since been condemned as anti-intellectual bias was at the time partly a result of wartime necessity: the languages being taught were mostly either languages for which no adequate grammars existed, or were being taught for a strictly utilitarian--which is to say limited conversational--purpose. In either case most of the time had to be spent working with native speakers and the learning of grammar played a facilitative but secondary role. The GI learners were not being taught a linguistic system in all its beautiful ramifications, but a way of behaving in emergencies.

Second, partly for historical reasons, the linguists had done their best work in phonology. This was the heyday of the phoneme and the allophone, and the structural sketch of Korean or Eastern Ojibwa which rarely extended beyond an elementary morphology. So what was analyzed and taught best was sounds and word forms, and the rest had to be entrusted pretty much to working with actual samples--memorized dialogs, for example. If one learned enough samples of speech, by induction and analogy one should be able to arrive at rules of syntax and rules of meaning. These aspects of language were not so much learned as soaked up.

Third, the prevailing philosophy was empiricism. It was supposed that to be scientific one must work with tangible data. The most tangible data are of course sounds, and this gave one more reason for concentrating on phonology. But it also imposed a hierarchy on the whole field of study. One should start with the most concrete data, namely sounds, and this would give a solid foundation for the next level of abstraction, morphs and morphemes, which in turn would make the final step possible, syntax. The empirical bias thus postponed indefinitely looking at a language as a complete system in which sounds, morphemes, syntax, and meaning are mutually dependent. As a later generation of linguists was to point out later with some acerbity, linguistic science was simply out of date. It did not understand the principle of scientific theory and model-building, which can leap ahead of the limited data that we have at our disposal here and now. In any case the effect again was a concentration on segments and a neglect of much of syntax and most meaning. Whatever could be expressed in the form of a static paradigm, whether sounds or inflections or phrase structures, got the bulk of attention.

The wartime teaching of languages was a success, though how much credit goes to the methods and how much to the motivation of students who had their choice between Russian verbs and front-line action, is a question for debate. The fact is that it succeeded well enough to be taken a decade later as a model for the reform of language teaching in the schools. Now that the crest of that reform is passed we can look back on it and decide, perhaps with less heat than would have been generated just four or five years ago, what it gave us and how much was to the good.

Surely one great benefit has been the emphasis on language as speech and the realization that every language makes its own unique selection from the range of possible human sounds. There is plenty of mispronunciation still, but the complacency toward it is gone. Both from the standpoint of practical skill and from that of deeper understanding students are better on this score than

they were twenty years ago. Here and there a critic can be heard saying that students should not worry about pronunciation, that if they make themselves understood they have done enough. But the criticism is muted, as if the critics knew that even the best efforts toward gaining skill in pronunciation were not going to attain a level much above mere comprehensibility anyway. The rest is just psychological counseling: naturally a student should not worry himself into a state about any problem in his studies, for that inhibits learning.

Pronunciation is also the area in which the scientific imprint is clearest. For the first time, textbooks used carefully drawn articulatory diagrams and were not afraid to talk about fricatives and back rounded vowels. Students were given explicit instructions on how to form sounds, and the instructions were moved from the two-page introduction into the body of the text. Along with more careful attention to the pronunciation of individual sounds came discussions of rhythm and intonation. Since here the theory on which the teaching was done was weaker, the results left more to be desired. Often things were taught that did not need to be, such as telling students to raise the pitch at the end of a question when they would do it anyway without being told. But on the whole the effect was good if only for the recognition of this important part of the communicative act. Taken altogether, structural linguistics merits a high score for what it did to the teaching of pronunciation.

A second high score goes for something that came about indirectly rather than as a result of deliberate planning. If language is speech, then it must be manifested in the interchange of messages, whether real or contrived, between teacher and student and among students. And since an hour contains only sixty minutes and there may be twenty or thirty students in a class, for there to be any sort of fair interchange something had to be happening all the time. For the conscientious teacher this meant the end of

those dreadful silences as students were puzzling out translations from their books, or dozing while two or three of their number wrote sentences on the blackboard. No doubt in some classes the higher pitch of activity carried with it a lot of randomness; but in the majority the increase in participation and alertness was on the plus side.

For the rest, whether we count it as plus or minus depends as much on the practitioner as on the principle. For now we come to those parts of the New Key, or the audiolingual habit theory, or the linguistic method--however one cares to name it--that have stirred the most disagreement. Are pattern drills good? Do students benefit from memorization? Is it fair to refuse an answer when someone asks why? Does one really learn best by never making a mistake? All these practises stem from the structuralists' conviction that a language is a set of habits. Where they were bad was when they fell in the hands of literal-minded teachers and textbook-writers who adopted the faith that language was a set of habits and nothing else. "Yours not to reason why, yours but to drill or die". If it is true that the majority of teachers who adopted the New Key were of this kind, then probably the net result was a loss, by comparison with what students might have learned just by working through some well-constructed self-teaching program. But one always has to compare what goes on in the classroom with what goes on in the classroom. Would there have been much more learning if those same teachers had used a different method? Possibly for a few, but I doubt that it would have been true for very many. Suppose we repeat each of the questions that we asked of the audiolingual approach to see whether the answers have to be negative.

First question, are pattern drills good? Two faults are generally found with them. First, natural learning of languages is not performed in this way; second, drilling is by nature mechanical and therefore by definition uninteresting. On the first objection,

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there are so many things about second-language learning that differ from first-language-learning that even if it were true no conclusion could be drawn. But it appears not to be true. In the study she made of the sleepy-time monologs of her two-and-a-half-year-old son, Ruth Hirsch Weir (1962, 82-84) recorded a consistent use of what she termed build-ups, break-downs, and completions. The child produced such sequences as

Block
Yellow block
Look at all the yellow block

Mommy
Mommy went bye-bye
Mommy went

Bobo's goes
To the bathroom
Clean off

not only on the part of the children but conspired in by adults as well. A parent's conversation with a child typically contains build-ups and repetitions: "Look at the doggie. Nice doggie. You like the doggie? Pet the doggie." These facts really enclose the answer

Weir's explanation was that "Construction of longer sentences often exceeds the child's linguistic capacity, and he resorts to a step-by-step procedure in working them out". But the significant fact is that the monologs were a form of self-directed practise. Build-ups and completions are common forms of pattern drills. Other investigators have found the same thing going on in the early stages of language learning,

to the second objection to pattern drills. If by making them a game the child can convert an uninteresting activity into an interesting one, language teachers have their work cut out for them. Given that drills are essential, we have to make them interesting. As Christina Paulston points out in her classification of pattern drills, the term "mechanical" cannot be used as a blanket characterization of all drills. There are degrees of mechanicalness, from pure parroting through responses that are partially controlled to interchanges where students are virtually on their own. Happily, the initial reaction against drilling has begun to ebb. It is reassuring to read that Wilga Rivers, Christina Paulston, and John Carroll are agreed that language-teaching as habit formation and

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language teaching as the establishment of rule-governed behavior are not mutually exclusive. (Paulston 1971, 7).

Second question, is memorization beneficial? The habit theory held that when students memorized natural discourse they acquired patterns which could then be extended by analogy. This idea sounds fishy today. But it often happens that we take our decisions first and find reasons for them afterward. By making memorization--which decades of educational doctrine had made altogether unrespectable--seem to be necessary on theoretical grounds, it was brought back into favor. Used in moderation its benefits are undeniable. It gives the student a context of sounds in which to practise his phonetic skill whether he understands the meaning or not. Given a gross understanding of a passage, segments of it can be switched around to make new messages. A properly memorized passage is one that is not produced haltingly. If we are willing to tap short-term memory in having students repeat a five-word sentence, there is no good pedagogical reason for not tapping long-term memory by having them repeat a fifty-word passage, if tangible benefits result. The difficulty with memorizations was much the same as that with drills: it had to be entrusted to a generation of teachers who had been brought up with a distaste for it.

Third question, is it fair to refuse an answer when students ask why? This is a point on which today's linguist waxes indignant. He is scandalized that anyone in his profession should ever have advised teachers that there is a child in all of us that eternally asks why, and that it is our duty to repress that child. But there are two kinds of why-asking, and I think--at least I hope--that the structuralist meant just one of them. The first is the why of arbitrary ~~decisions~~ choices on the part of a language. Why does French express the future by means of a suffix when English expresses it with the word will? The student who asks that question is not

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seeking the only sensible answer that can be given, which is in terms of the history of the two languages. Rather he is asking what right French has to do something different from the God-given way of doing it in English. Obviously there is no answer to such a question; or rather there is one answer which we must learn to give to all such questions at the outset of any language course: each language has its own way of structuring (or, if you will, surface-structuring) reality. The other kind of why-asking is the sort that one encounters when a student fails to see a connection. "Why is estar rather than ser used in this sentence?" A question of this kind has to be answered. It may mean that the student has failed to grasp a distinction; it may mean that the teacher or the textbook has not explained the distinction properly. In either case, if one of the effects of structuralism has been to stifle questions like this, it has been harmful. Of course we need not all agree on whether every such question should be answered every time any student asks it. There's a time and place for everything.

The last question is whether one learns best by never making a mistake. This has been a deeply embedded part of audiolingual doctrine, which related to the empirical bias of structuralism. All structural studies were based on a corpus. The corpus was produced by one or more native speakers. Native speakers by definition do not make mistakes. (This of course is disputed today, but at least it is safe to say that the mistakes made by native speakers are not usually the same as those made by non-natives.) The models used in audiolingual teaching were therefore always correct, for they never came from anywhere but a native corpus. To confront a class with a wrong example was a violation of the commandments. One adherent to this doctrine even went so far as to extend it to the truth of model sentences: it was wrong to say things like The crocodile sat in the living room. (Poor Ionescu!) We justified our abhorrence of incorrect models--that is, models of what not to do--on the psychological grounds that a bad sentence

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is as easy to remember and imitate as a good one. But in part the reason was the structuralist preoccupation with the positive corpus. Today's generative linguistics has made us realize that rules not properly restricted will produce bad sentences as well as good ones, and if we want the student to avoid the bad ones we have to let him see the results of failing to restrict the rules as he should. This does not mean that we are going to dwell much on mistakes in any part of our teaching program except the one that has to do with grammatical explanation, or that we are going to tolerate compositions that are full of errors. But the morbid fear of error was a side effect of structuralism that did no good.

I've given mixed answers to my list of [redacted] questions. Pattern drills are an indispensable legacy of structuralism; so probably is memorization, but not necessarily for the reasons that were originally given. The refusal to answer the notorious <u>why</u> question was bad, though the structural linguists may simply have been misunderstood on this point. Negative evidence--in other words, mistakes--has to be considered along with positive--to correct an error you first must identify it. If structuralism had its faults it was because, by pretending to give all the answers, it led teachers to believe that other answers were unnecessary or wrong. There are doubtless more points on which the linguists of this school could be scored, but they would still come out I think not looking too bad.

Structuralism has had its day, and now the air is thick with controversy again. Before assessing the direct effects of the new linguistics, we should look at the effects that are simply the result of change, any change. When a government falls, its old enemies as well as its new ones emerge--one sees monarchists and revolutionaries fighting in the same ranks. So one noteworthy result of the decline of structuralism and the rise of formalism has been the resurgence of traditional grammar. In the field of Spanish textbooks the two biggest money-makers in the last five years have

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been one book originally published twenty years ago and lightly refurbished, and another done five years ago that is entirely traditional in its outlook, though in every respect an attractive book. It was to be expected that traditional texts would make a comeback, at least temporarily, because generative-transformational grammarians have made a point of their kinship with traditional grammar. Of course what they mean is their kinship with Otto Jespersen, not with Goold Brown, but for teachers unaware of this any traditionalism gains in respectability.

The direct effects of post-structural linguistics have necessarily been relatively light for economic reasons. Structuralism had the force of policy behind it, with a good deal of public and private money. The pursestrings have tightened and there is no avenue from the model-builder to the classroom except through personal contact, a few articles, and an occasional textbook. The result has been **less mutual understanding and** a tendency to adopt the apparatus more than the principles of the new formalism. The first serious attempts to present English grammar in a textbook conceived along generative lines were about 1964, and they were conspicuous in their formalisms and pretty undistinguished otherwise. When we realize that it was not till about 1964 that Chomsky was persuaded to accept the notion of deep structure, which is felt today to be the most important conceptual innovation of the whole **transformationalist** movement, it is not surprising that the earlier texts look crude today. Unfortunately the impression that generative grammar still makes is chiefly through its externals. One example is an attractive recently-published book with an avowed transformational aim which preserved the audiolingual format almost intact with just a few changes in terminology and a little more explicit description by transformations. The improvements are so slight as hardly to outweigh the disconcerting effect of introducing them.

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It is too early to tell what the long-term effects of current linguistic theory will be, but I am very much afraid that conflict itself is having the unfortunate result of turning the profession away from ties with linguistics and toward other ways of getting students to learn. It is sobering to remember that human beings are capable of learning a second language with no formal guidance whatever, and linguistics is as capable of being dispensed with as anything else if it cannot make a reasonable bid for attention.

Let me try to make clear why I believe that linguistics has failed to influence language teaching as it might have, and how I think it may yet fulfil the promise that seemed for a moment almost on the point of coming true. The failure rests in the kind of intellectual game that linguists play. With structuralism the rules were those of a super Erector set. There were pieces and arrangements. With generativists the game resembles an automatic chessplayer. The pieces and arrangements are there, but the focus is on rearrangements and their connections. In either case the explanations that result when the game is extended to teaching a language are of a kind that a bright student can ordinarily figure out on his own. How essential, really, is it for him to be given in careful detail each step of the passive transformation? If he is confronted by two sentences, The police arrested Clovis and Clovis was arrested by the police, and knows that they report the same event, does he need to be told that the object becomes the subject, the subject becomes the object of the preposition by, the auxiliary be is introduced, and the verb is converted to a past participle? Unless he is a moron the changes are self-evident and

can be deduced by simple observation. We should remember that the basis for the frightening explicitness of transformational rules was to make them independent of any kind of editing by human explainers. But students and teachers are human and are intervening in the process and editing it. They make inductive leaps over reams of intermediate detail, and do it intuitively. If we force all the attention on the formalism and on top of that tell the student that the two constructions--active and passive--mean the same, we cheat him of the one thing that we can tell him which he can't deduce without examining dozens of contexts: namely, what the meaning of the passive is, where it is used and why. Nothing could be more calculated to destroy interest than to be told that languages make distinctions without differences,

that they transform capriciously and to no purpose. The text that I mentioned a moment ago furnishes a simple example of how the apparatus gets in the way of understanding. Generative grammar recognizes a set of transformations called movement transformations, of which the so-called adverb-preposing rule is one. If you take a sentence like Wait until I call you, you can prepose the adverb clause and get Until I call you, wait. . Since generative doctrine claims that such transformations do not change meaning, the book in question says flatly that the two sentences mean the same. If they did, then either would make an appropriate answer to the question How soon can I leave? Try it-- Wait until I call you, Until I call you, wait. Recent linguistic theory has been concerned above all else with fitting all the pieces together in a coherent framework. Many linguists have hoped that out of this would come a new understanding of the relationship of structures, such that we would be able to sequence our materials in a logical way. But a recent experiment suggests that extreme care in sequencing is not worth the trouble, and that students learn better by being given simply a set of materials that is interesting because of its situation and content. (Hauptman). There is a point of diminishing returns in trying to build all the intricacy of a linguistic model into the materials that are used for teaching. We do not know how the brain manages to hold the things that are stored in it. For all we can tell, the parts of language that are tucked away there may be tied together in a fashion that in no way resembles the remorselessly logical system of formal grammar, and attempting to impose such an organization on students may do more harm than good. We must know where to stop in teaching a linguistic structure--how much we can helpfully do, and how much can be left to the learner's brain to organize through mechanisms that are more efficient than anything we can devise. It is probably useful to give a learner the paradigms of

verbs. That surely saves time. But being told that questions contain a Q element that transforms them from base structures resembling declaratives is about as useful as being told that heat differs from cold by virtue of its caloric principle. Whatever truth beyond mere tautology there may be in it is intuitively clear to anyone who has made a statement and asked a question, and the point does not need to be taught.

What does need to be taught--let me say it again--is what is not self-evident, and that is meaning. No student can infer the meaning of the subjunctive from a single pair of examples. Current linguistics has been identified with the cognitive grasp of language, and yet the ultimate in cognition is neglected. A fairly simple case will show the difficulty and how linguists can help solve it if they will. Take the English possessive with and without the word own. We give the student a pair of sentences on the order of John read his book and John read his own book. For someone immersed in generative syntax, the use of own is clear: it is a way of resolving a syntactic ambiguity, showing that the possessor of the book is the subject of the sentence. But to give that to a student, or to let him infer it, is to mislead him. The use of own is one of an uncounted number of supposedly syntactic questions that are really semantic. If we are prospective buyers who approach two sidewalk vendors at an art display, and are interested in a painting about midway between their two positions, we might ask Is this one yours? and intend it to mean 'Is it yours to sell?' But if we ask Is this one your own? we probably intend to ask whether the vendor is also the painter. If a census-taker asks the man standing in front of a house Is this house yours? he could be taken to mean 'Is it the one you occupy?'; but if he asks Is this house your own? he probably means 'Do you have title to it?' If a den mother at a Boy Scout jamboree points to a boy and asks another den mother Is this one yours? she probably means 'Does this

one belong to your pack?' but if she asks Is this one your own? she most likely means 'Are you the child's natural mother?' On the other hand if the first den mother is put in charge of her pack and another pack as well at a general assembly of all the packs, and the second den mother again points to one of the boys and asks Is this one yours? the meaning is probably 'Does this boy belong to the larger group that you are in charge of?'; and if she asks Is this one your own? she is probably asking whether the boy belongs to the original pack. The word own is merely an intensifier of possession. The fact that it is able to clear up a syntactic ambiguity is only one of the effects of applying a highly abstract meaning in a concrete situation. The moral of this example is that a linguistics which cannot see beyond syntax or the formalisms of a predicate calculus will not offer much to help solve the cognitive problems of teaching a foreign language. The structuralists were derided for their thumbnail grammatical rules, their "summaries of behavior" as they were called; but the current pinball-machine solutions are no better. John Lamendella dismisses all the cognitive claims of generative transformational grammar and with them any relevance to second-language teaching. This is perhaps too severe; but it is true that both structuralism and transformationalism concentrate on the form of sentences and their parts, and neglect meaning, which is the part of language that most eludes the student's grasp. There is much here that linguists can do if they will.

A backward glance at what I have said and left unsaid suggests that the influence of linguistics has been mostly to the good where an influence has been positively applied, and that the sins have been mostly sins of omission. The structuralists contributed immensely to the performing side of language, to phonology and habit-formation. But they neglected the cognitive phase. Their successors talked a lot about cognition but they have done next to nothing to supply the lack. If I were to idealize a linguistically-

based foreign-language course, I would prescribe an audiolingual text for classroom use and a book of explanations to be used out of class, done with a view to giving the student a native speaker's feel for the distinctions that are made. It would probably be a long book, but its length would be weighed against the time that students now waste worrying about distinctions they can't understand. Meanwhile the changes that we might make in our pedagogy as the winds of theory blow this way or that are not going to strike very deep, and as people with a job to do and the professional right to pick and choose we can be as eclectic as we please. If most of the significant changes are to come from other directions than linguistics, so be it. But it need not happen, and as a linguist I would be ashamed if it did.

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